



2011 National Christmas Tree Music Program

The lighting ceremony of the National Christmas Tree on the Ellipse, south of the White House, is the beginning of three weeks of celebration in music. Each night during December, musical groups, primarily from the Washington, DC area, provide entertainment for visitors. It is a one of a kind opportunity to enjoy the sounds of the holiday season against the backdrop of the National Christmas Tree and the smaller trees representing all fifty states, the District of Columbia and the five U.S. Territories.

National Christmas Tree History

For 85 years, the American tradition of lighting a national Christmas Tree has continued, interrupted only briefly in its history during moments of great national travail.

In 1923, President Calvin Coolidge lit a "Community Christmas Tree" on behalf of "all Americans." A Senator from Vermont, Coolidge's home state, arranged for a cut fir tree from Middlebury College to be erected in President's Park (The Ellipse) for lighting. President Coolidge declined to speak at the ceremony, but he did push a button switch to light a 60-foot tree.

Later that evening, the Marine Band performed in concert near the tree.

Sir Winston Churchill appeared on the South Porch with President Roosevelt for the lighting ceremony in 1941. Both men delivered Christmas messages to the gathered throng before sharing the official lighting duties. By the next year, Washington was under a war-imposed blackout. Lights were placed on the tree in 1942 but never lit, and the tree remained 'dark' from 1942 through 1944.

In 1954, the lighting ceremony was named "The Christmas Pageant of Peace," and a "Pathway of Peace" was established featuring smaller, decorated

trees – one for each state and territory.

In 1963, the tree was not lit until December 22, after a service at the Lincoln Memorial, concluding a 30-day period of national mourning that followed the assassination of President John F. Kennedy.

The beautiful Colorado blue spruce that serves as the current National Christmas Tree was planted on the Ellipse in the winter of 2011. The tree was brought to Washington, DC by the National Park Service from a nursery in New Jersey.

How To Apply for the 2012 National Christmas Tree Music Program

Musical groups interested in performing in future evening programs for the National Christmas Tree Music Program should visit the National Park Service website at

<http://www.nps.gov/whho> to print out an application. The application must be faxed or postmarked no later than September 15, 2012. For more information, contact President's Park at 202-208-1631.

2011 Music Program Schedule

Tuesday, December 6

- 5:00-5:30 pm Lovettsville Elementary School Chorus
Lovettsville, VA
- 6:00-6:30 pm Cashell 4th and 5th Grade Chorus
Rockville, MD
- 7:00-7:30 pm The Eclectics
Washington, DC
- 8:00-8:30 pm Gospel Sounds of Kim & Maggie Sharpe
Washington, DC

Wednesday, December 7

- 6:00-6:30 pm Vicki Bryson
Ooltewah, TN
- 7:00-7:30 pm Banneker Bobcats
Burtonsville, MD
- 8:00-8:30 pm St. John's Episcopal School Chorus
Olney, MD

Thursday, December 8

- 6:00-6:30 pm St. Mary's Chorus & Advanced Band
Rockville, MD
- 7:00-7:30 pm Cape Chorale
Lewes, DE

Friday, December 9

- 5:00-5:30 pm Dawn Crafton Dance Connection
Gaithersburg, MD
- 6:00-6:30 pm Blue Ridge Thunder Cloggers
Waterford, VA
- 7:00-7:30 pm Slater's Dance Studio
Edgewater, MD
- 8:00-8:30 pm Brownie Troop #2352
Woodbine, MD

Saturday, December 10

- 1:00-1:30 pm Girl Scouts/Service Unit 56-1
Oakton, VA
- 2:00-2:30 pm Cardinal Cloggers
Herndon, VA
- 3:00-3:30 pm Melissa Welz
North Bergen, NJ
- 5:00-5:30 pm Fairfax Jubil-Aires
Fairfax, VA
- 6:00-6:30 pm Kendal Conrad
Pottstown, PA

Saturday, December 10 (continued)

- 7:00-7:30 pm Goshen UMC Dance Ministry
Montgomery Village, MD
- 8:00-8:30 pm Ox Hill Baptist Church Youth Choir
Chantilly, VA

Sunday, December 11

- 1:00-1:30 pm Girl Scouts of Fairfax County
Fairfax, VA
- 2:00-2:30 pm County Steppers Dance Team
Northern Virginia, VA
- 3:00-3:30 pm Barrington Madrigals
Barrington, IL

Wednesday, December 14

- 5:00-5:30 pm Lady Shropshire and the Passionistas
Washington, DC
- 6:00-6:30 pm Olney Elementary School Chorus
Olney, MD
- 7:00-7:30 pm Albemarle High School Treble Jazz
Charlottesville, VA
- 8:00-8:30 pm Washington Redskins Marching Band
Ashburn, VA

Friday, December 16

- 6:00-6:30 pm Mayfield 6th Grade School Chorus
Manassas, VA
- 7:00-7:30 pm West Chamber Choir
Doylestown, PA
- 8:00-8:30 pm Central Crossing High School Choir
Woodbridge, IL

Saturday, December 17

- 1:00-1:30 pm Mid-Atlantic Crusade Chorus
Oxon Hill, MD
- 2:00-2:30 pm Four Thirds Summation
Centreville, VA
- 3:00-3:30 pm Simmons Family Singers
Greensboro, NC
- 5:00-5:30 pm Lopez Studios Singers/Youth Choir
Reston, VA
- 6:00-6:30 pm Christmas Singers
Gaithersburg, MD
- 7:00-7:30 pm Bull Run Cloggers
Manassas, VA
- 8:00-8:30 pm Luanne's School of Dance
Burgettstown, PA



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Sunday, December 18

- 1:00-1:30 pm Children of the Light Dancers
Fairfax, VA
- 2:00-2:30 pm Washington Mennonite Chorus
Washington, DC
- 3:00-3:30 pm Young Piano Performers
Springfield VA

Tuesday, December 20

- 6:00-6:30 pm Lee High School Madrigals
Springfield, VA
- 7:00-7:30 pm Merritt Academy Ringers
Fairfax, VA
- 8:00-8:30 pm Pinebrook Elementary School Choir
Aldie, VA

Wednesday, December 21

- 5:00-5:30 pm Camelot Elementary School Chorus
Annandale, VA
- 6:00-6:30 pm City on a Hill Dancers
Alexandria, VA
- 7:00-7:30 pm Louise Archer School Chorus
Vienna, VA
- 8:00-8:30 pm The Potonacs
Washington, DC

Thursday, December 22

- 6:00-6:30 pm Endless Mountains Children's Choir
Thompson, PA
- 7:00-7:30 pm Voices in Praise
Owings, MD
- 8:00-8:30 pm The Singing Angels
Cleveland, OH

Friday, December 23

- 5:00-5:30 pm Barton and Williams School of Dance
Stafford, VA
- 6:00-6:30 pm Metropolitan Fine Arts Center
Alexandria, VA
- 7:00-7:30 pm Boyle School of Irish Dance
Manassas Park, VA
- 8:00-8:30 pm Hearts of Gold
Linthic, MD

